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Animals.—Afternoon and evening.

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all cases we require the writer's name and address,
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The Signal Service Bureau report indicates
for to-day in the Middle Atlantic States, partly
cloudy weather, followed by occasional
rains, light north-westerly winds, backing to
southerly, stationary or higher temperature,
stationary, followed by falling, barometer.

Senator BLAINE has been favoring his
constituents with some views on financial
questions which—for him—are remarkably
sound and courageous. Mr. BLAINE's Bel-
fast speech would make an excellent cam-
paign document in this State, where the
agitators of the Labor-Greenback Party
are, at present, having everything their
own way. Our "great Senator" is proba-
bly engaged in the preparation of one
of his "great efforts," which will, of
course, be replete with financial wisdom,
but, as in the case of the convincing
speeches which he has about to deliver
at various times last session, he
may keep it on hand, till it is ripe and
rotten, and then leave it unsaid. That is
one of the penalties of having so fastidious
and polished an orator as Senator CONKLING
charged with the task of striking "the key-
note of the campaign"; but the possession
of so great a man should, doubtless, be
appreciated by his party without respect to
any tangible evidence of his greatness.
Perhaps, if somebody would help him to
make up his mind, as to whether he can
safely permit a State Convention to be held,
he might be free to devote his time to the
questions of the hour.

The action of North Carolina's Demo-
cratic Returning Boards in the last
election clearly indicates what course
they will take in the more im-
portant contest which is to come. Where-
ever they have had the slightest pre-
text, under the laws in force, of throw-
ing out Republican votes, they have done
so without regard either to decency or fair
play. In one case they cast aside and re-
fused to count the vote of eight townships,
which gave a large Republican majority,
on the flimsy pretext that a few
informal ballots were found in their boxes,
and in another they threw out the vote of
a township with a Republican majority of
one hundred and eighty because, as they
alleged, there was some irregularity in the
registration. In both cases, their tactics,
which were practiced exclusively in Re-
publican districts, will be observed, re-
sulted in giving the county to the Demo-
crats. These acts; of injustice appear
all the more flagrant when it is
remembered that they are in direct op-
position to the decision of the Supreme Court
of the State, which held that the County
Commissioners in canvassing the township
returns were given no judicial powers, their
duty being simply to tabulate, count, and de-
clare the result.

The "declaration of principles" by the
members of the Greenback Party who
assembled in Washington, on Tuesday night,
is in some respects unique. It declares
that the powers of the General Government
are "restricted to the express grants of the
Constitution," and yet it favors the issue of
irredeemable Treasury notes, their liberal
expenditure on internal improvements and
the construction of railroads, and the pay-
ment of interest-bearing bonds by promises
to pay on demand, which are to bear a
falsehood on their face. It would be a
salutary task for the Greenbackers to
attempt to find warrant for these de-
mands in "the express grants of the
Constitution." The first article of their
creed implies a belief in the ability of the
party to stand alone which is not likely to
be justified by results. It is as follows:

"We believe the two great political parties
as now constituted to be so completely un-
der the control of office-seekers, profes-
sional politicians, bankers, and money-
mongers, that it is unsafe longer to intrust
to them this Government." Nor are the
Greenbackers more likely to reduce to
practice their second proposition, of filling
all positions of trust and responsibility with
"intelligent and pure men, regardless of
former party associations."

There used to be two Superintendents
of the Railway Mail Service. Congress abo-
lished the office of one of these and re-
duced the salary of the other, Mr. VAIL, to
\$3,500 per annum. The office, as every-
body knows, is an important one; its duties
are constantly increasing, and the office is
obliged to make long and frequent trips
over the mail lines. But all efforts to induce
the House to allow the Superintendent any-
thing for his traveling expenses were un-
availing. The result is that, after ex-
perimenting on a salary of \$3,500 a
year, this efficient officer finds that he
has paid out nearly all of his salary for
July in expenses incurred in traveling for
the Government. He proposes to resign,
and the average Democratic demagogue
will at once suggest that the Government

can send out into the prairies and lasso as
good a man every day. This may be a fine
rate way to carry on a Government, but
this sort of economy comes with a bad grace
from Democratic Representatives who
include "stag whiskey," champagne, and
cigars in the necessary expenses of a Con-
gressional committee.

The announcement that an overture of
Pennsylvania bonds to the tune of \$100,000
look place during the official term of
JOHN M. BICKEL, a Democrat, and that the
facts in the case were suppressed by another
person equally prominent in that party, will
hardly be regarded as a comforting one by
the political leaders who have
recently made so much ado about
what they were pleased to call corruption
in the Republican administration of the
finances. The recent statement of Treas-
urer NOTES put an end to those ridiculous
charges; and now it is shown that
friends of the very men who made them
were responsible for every defalcation
which occurred in the Treasury of
the State. What action the Legislature
will take in the matter remains to be seen.
It is to be hoped, however, that the in-
nocent holders of the fraudulent bonds will
not be made to suffer for the peculations of
Democratic officials.

THE DEMOCRATIC DRIFT.

We have long contended that the currency
question was the leading issue in our
national politics, and would continue to be so
until it found a definite and final solu-
tion in the supremacy of sound principles.

We have also maintained that this con-
test would have to be fought out be-
tween two great parties, which should, di-
viding the people according to their senti-
ments and convictions on the subject in
question. The independent Greenback
movement could accomplish nothing in and
of itself through a third organization,
but was destined either to draw one
of the old parties to its own posi-
tion by threatening its integrity, or have
its fire drawn by the action of that party
in assuming virtually the same ground.

Whether we regard the greater as absorb-
ing the less, or the less as swallowing the
greater, makes little difference; but it is
becoming quite evident that there will
ultimately be but one Greenback Party,
and that it will retain its old name, under
which it has adopted every political heresy
that promised success by pandering to
ignorance and prejudice, from the time of
JEFFERSON down. No one who has closely
watched the current of events can fail to
see the drift of the Democratic Party to-
ward a full acceptance of the essential de-
mands of the Greenbackers. It began to
show itself here and there years ago, and,
in fact, most of these heresies had their
origin in some Democratic convention, or
in the utterances of some acknowledged
leader of that party. They have appeared
and reappeared, each time more boldly
and more clearly revealed, and during the
last session of Congress they were an-
nounced and zealously advocated by some
of the most conspicuous and influential
men who represented the Democracy in the
councils of the nation. As the party con-
ventions meet and preparations are made
for the political canvass of the coming
Fall, we find at every move, and in almost
every Democratic utterance that can be
regarded as authoritative, clearer and
clearer indications that the party is
arraying itself on the side of irredeemable
Government notes, the abolition of banks
of issue, the payment of the public bonds
in paper promises, and a final abandon-
ment of the specie basis. Even in the most
conservative States, no Democratic con-
vention has ventured to take ground boldly
against this tendency. Perhaps we ought
to except little Delaware, which pipes up
for the "time-honored and constitutional
faith of the Democratic Party" in "gold
and silver coin, or a paper currency con-
vertible into such coin," but in the general
movement Delaware will have even less
power to resist the current than had Mr.
BAYARD among his party associates in the
Senate.

The men who are speaking for the De-
mocracy now with the best assurance of
being listened to are such as Mr. VOORHEES
and Mr. HENDRICKS in Indiana. The
former has left no doubt as to where he
stands or whether he would lead his party,
and the latter seems at last to have gained
sufficient courage to leave the fence behind
him, and has become the champion of the
"Tall Sycamore of the Wabash" as a candi-
date for the United States Senate, on the
very ground of his outspoken financial
views. Even the sometime Conservative Sen-
ator McDONALD is gradually giving his scruples
to the winds and preparing to keep at the
front, as the inevitable tidal wave of his
party sweeps into the Greenback channel.
There is a faint reminiscence of his con-
servatism in the statement, in his Logans-
port speech, that "a specie basis is the nor-
mal financial condition of every commer-
cial country, because specie in some man-
ner forms the standard of value," but it is
promptly followed by declarations in favor
of an abolition of the national banks, which
would make resumption more difficult, and
the free use of Treasury notes to lighten
the burden of the Government debt, and at
the same time furnish a "safe circulating
medium for the people." That surrenders
the whole case. If the Government credit,
freely used in the form of irredeemable
notes, will furnish a safe circulating me-
dium without cost, at the same time that it
lessens the burden of interest-bearing debt,
it may well be asked, why think of return-
ing to the specie basis? Senator McDON-
ALD's concession carries with it the very
essence of the Greenback doctrine.

But the latest declaration of Democratic
faith comes to us from one of the remotest
of the Southern States. State Conventions
in the South have heretofore been rather
chary of speaking out on the subject, and
have awaited the lead of the North, but
Louisiana, always somewhat more reckless
than the rest, has given expression to the
party doctrine boldly and explicitly, inter-
preting truly the cue given in Indiana and
elsewhere. Its declaration of financial
faith is the Greenback platform in all its
fullness. No essential point is omitted.
Retirement of national bank-notes and sub-
stitution of greenbacks; unconditional re-
peal of the Resumption act, leaving those
notes perpetually irredeemable; payment
of Government bonds and obligations in
local-tender notes, except where otherwise

provided in the original law under which
they were issued; and repeal of all the laws
by which it is otherwise provided—that is
that but the Greenback platform! Yet it
is the platform of the Louisiana Democracy,
and presumably of all the Southern
Democracy, as it is, in effect, the De-
mocracy of the West. When this is
accepted and declared as the doctrine
of the Democracy of the nation, there
will be no more occasion for a Greenback
Party. Those who have gone into the in-
dependent movement for the sake of these
doctrines will be welcomed to the Demo-
cratic ranks, and find themselves quite at
home, while the Socialists and Labor Re-
formers will be fain to fall back into their
own world-regenerating organizations.

It cannot be denied that there are conser-
vative elements in the Democratic Party
which will be averse to the tendency toward
irredeemable paper money and practical re-
pudiation, but what can they do? In the
West and South they are feeble, and will be
merely overruled, and it is the West
and South that is going to control the De-
mocracy in its next important move. South-
ern Democrats have not a deep sense of the
sacredness of national obligations incurred
in defeating their designs, nor have they
yet learned to regard the honor of the
nation as a treasure which they are bound
to guard. Western Democrats have little
comprehension of economic principles, and
are reckless of means when they have an
end in view. This alliance will be all-power-
ful with the party, and half-hearted, pro-
tests from the East—half-hearted, because
hopeless, and fraught with a fear of
dividing the party and endangering its
prospects of success—will be in vain. This
inevitable drift of the Democracy makes
the course of the Republican Party plain.
It will find itself face to face with the
consolidated ranks of the enemies
of the national honor and the oppo-
nents of sound principles and a safe
financial policy. It will have no fur-
ther excuse for parleying or dallying with
the issue. It will have to take its own im-
pregnable position, and fight, as it has
fought before, for principle, for honesty,
and for the safety of the nation. It is work-
ing toward that position as visibly as its
opponents are taking the other, and when
the struggle comes, it will find recruits in
those whose convictions are right and
stronger than the bonds of party, wherever
they may be found and whatever may have
been their previous affiliations. The issue
of the contest ought not to be doubtful.

BANK STOCKS AND BANK PROFITS.

During the present year a fact which has
been unpleasantly brought to the notice of
holders of bank stocks is the gradual de-
cline in the rate of dividends and in the
market value of the stocks, the decline in
price not being confined to New-York, but
extending to nearly all the considerable
cities, and ranging from 1 to 10 and even 20
per cent. Of the City banks, there are five-
teen which have passed a year without di-
vidend payments, and a few have paid nothing
for several years. In the quarter ending
the last week in June, the Clearing-house
statement shows an increase of \$303,300
in the surplus of the 15 State banks, more
than offset by a decline of \$437,100 in the
44 national banks; and on looking over
the full list of the City banks, we find that
23 gained in surplus and 48 lost, since the
year opened.

That most of the banks reduce their di-
vidends and some suspend them is not sur-
prising; to do so is the plainest dictate of
prudence, which, perhaps, would better have
been followed earlier. There is ample au-
thority for the statement that during the
past three years not one-half, and during
the past year not one-third, of the City
banks have earned the dividends they have
paid; and when stockholders thus receive
money not earned but taken from surplus,
it is not incorrect to say that instead of get-
ting interest on their money invested, they
are really receiving back portions of the
principal. During 1876, there was a re-
duction of about \$6,500,000 in the capi-
tal of the City banks, and since then there has
been a further reduction of about \$9,000,000,
besides reduction in surplus. The fol-
lowing shows the percentage of surplus to
capital in all the national banks of the
country, at the dates named:

Date.	Number of Banks.	Surplus to Capital.
Sept. 1, 1869.....	1,451	20.44
Sept. 1, 1870.....	1,601	23.80
Sept. 1, 1871.....	1,695	22.04
Sept. 1, 1872.....	1,852	22.59
Sept. 1, 1873.....	1,955	24.19
Sept. 1, 1874.....	1,971	26.20
Sept. 1, 1875.....	2,047	26.90
Sept. 1, 1876.....	2,091	26.40
Sept. 1, 1877.....	2,072	25.60

This shows a recent decline, but the sur-
plus accumulated in more active times is
not yet exhausted. The ratio of dividends
paid and of earnings to capital and surplus
during successive half-yearly periods is as
follows:

Period.	Dividends to Capital.	Earnings to Capital and Surplus.
Six Months Ending—		
Sept. 1, 1869.....	5.42	6.50
Sept. 1, 1870.....	5.18	6.27
Sept. 1, 1871.....	4.98	5.99
Sept. 1, 1872.....	5.18	6.27
Sept. 1, 1873.....	4.98	6.02
Sept. 1, 1874.....	5.07	6.10
Sept. 1, 1875.....	5.12	6.17
Sept. 1, 1876.....	5.22	6.31
Sept. 1, 1877.....	5.09	6.09
Sept. 1, 1878.....	4.81	5.84
Sept. 1, 1879.....	5.09	6.08
Sept. 1, 1880.....	5.01	5.98
Sept. 1, 1881.....	4.88	5.85
Sept. 1, 1882.....	4.92	5.86
Sept. 1, 1883.....	4.60	5.57
Sept. 1, 1884.....	4.39	5.47
Sept. 1, 1885.....	4.54	5.82

Here is a nearly unbroken decline in all
the ratios, but most notably in that of
earnings to capital and surplus; and al-
though the ratio of dividends should not
exceed, even if it is permitted to equal,
that of earnings, it appears that the decline
in column 4 has overtaken and passed that
in column 3, thus proving that the national
banks, in aggregate, have been for over two
years paying their stockholders more than
their earnings. The reason for such pay-
ment has been partly the mistaken idea that
dividends are indispensable to the continu-
ance of good standing, partly the desire
to escape taxation, and partly the fact
that "they could not help responding to
the agonies of the stockholders and the
necessities of the case," "because their
stockholders consist largely of women
and other dependent persons," "who can-

not live in this exhausted state of things
unless they get something out of their
stock." On the fact the decline in all these
ratios might be due to an increase in capital
and surplus, but capital and surplus have,
in fact, been decreasing. The decline, be-
tween 1875 and 1876, in the ratio of earn-
ings to capital and surplus was 2.2 per
cent. in New-England, 3.2 in the Middle
States, 2 in the South, 2.3 in the West, and
3.6 in the whole country, thus indicating
the relative shrinkage of earnings to be
largest in the States where banks average
the largest in capital and accumulations.
During the half-yearly periods ending March
and Sept. 1, 1876 and 1877, the national
banks charged off their books as losses
\$8,501,000, \$13,217,000, \$8,176,000,
\$11,759,000—\$37,719,026 for 1876, and
\$19,933,588 for 1877; this is equivalent,
for 1876, to 3.92 per cent. of the capital,
or 14.97 per cent. of the surplus, or 3.11
per cent. of capital and surplus combined;
for 1877, to 4.09 per cent. of the capital,
or 16.03 per cent. of the surplus, or 3.26
per cent. of both combined. During the
half-yearly periods ending Sept. 1, 1876
and 1877, (the figures for the half years
ending March 1 being not widely different
from those,) the number of banks and
amount of capital paying no dividends was
as follows, given in thousands:

	1876	1877
N. E. States.....	No. Banks. Cap'l.	No. Banks. Cap'l.
Middle.....	32 37,700	35 39,055
South.....	94 16,135	92 15,673
Western.....	84 4,400	80 4,238
Pacific.....	129 13,573	110 10,775
Pacific.....	14 1,950	18 1,135

Total U. S. 273 \$44,058 288 \$41,108

It is not impossible that these amounts
charged off for losses, as above stated, are
above the present rate, and represent a
clearing away of items which had been car-
ried along in the hope of saving a portion of
them; on the other hand, there is scarcely
a failure where the losses, commonly said
to be "well distributed," do not hit some
banks. The causes of diminished income
do not lie out of sight. The action of
the Government in refunding has caused
a large substitution of lower-rate
bonds for the old sixes, and the dis-
appearance of the gold premium has re-
duced the dollar-income from interest as
well as the currency market price of the
bonds to be counted in assets; and, most
of all, money has been so idle for years
that the constant problem has been how
to put it to any use without incurring un-
warrantable risk. On the other hand, ex-
penses, particularly taxes, have been almost
undiminished; the latter average 3 to 4 per
cent. on capital. In 1876, the Bank of
Commerce, American Exchange, and Metro-
politan paid respectively \$1,333, \$742,
and \$660 per working day, averaging
4.40 per cent. on capital, so that, to pay
their dividends at the rate of that year,
they needed over 12 per cent. income on
their capital, without counting working ex-
penses at all. Since then the former has
cut down its \$10,000,000 capital one-half,
and the latter its \$4,000,000 one-fourth,
in the effort to lighten tax burdens, and re-
ductions of capital and surplus both, by
voluntary action, have been general.

The foregoing review is not intended to
suggest that the banks are in a bad way.
It is simply—not for Mr. F. B. BURLEIGH
and his new friend KEANEY, the one of whom
is a dishonest, and the other possibly an
honest, denunciator of banks—but for other
bank haters who have not thought at all
beyond the visible fact that banks have
plenty of money which they refuse to part
with without security, to provoke reflection
on the clamor against banking "monopol-
ists," and all capitalists as consumers of
prosperity that ought to be divided fairly
among "the people."

BAYONETS AND SABRES.

Gen. GRANT is reported to have said re-
cently, at Berlin, to an officer in the German
Army detailed to his suite, that he ques-
tioned very much whether in modern war
the sabre or the bayonet was of use. "What
I mean," said the General, "is this: Any-
thing that adds to the burden carried by
the soldier is a weakness to the army.
Every ounce he carries should tell in his
efficiency. The bayonet is heavy, and if it
were removed, or if its weight in food or
ammunition were added to its place, the
army would be stronger. As for the bayonet
as a weapon, if soldiers come near enough
to use it, they can do as much good
with the club end of their muskets. The
same is true of sabres. I would take
away the bayonet, and give the soldiers pis-
tols in place of sabres. A sabre is always
an awkward thing to carry." The General
had no doubt war showed instances when
the bayonet was effective, but those in-
stances were so few that he did not think
they would pay for the heavy burden im-
posed upon an army by the carrying of the
bayonet. The German officer was not con-
vinced by the General's reasoning, and said
he "knew of cases where effective
work had been done with the bayonet,
and that the Prussians would not aban-
don it." Now, he could hardly have read
the statistical abstract, published in 1877,
of the returns of killed and wounded on the
German side in what is officially design-
ated the "German campaign in France,"
for where, in that great war, the bayonet
killed its units and tens, the bullet de-
stroyed its thousands and tens of thousands.
Nor, comparatively speaking, were the
wounds inflicted by cold steel severe.
Three officers and eighteen men were killed
by lance or bayonet, to a total of five hun-
dred and seventy-four injured by those
weapons. The most harmless, however, of
all instruments of warfare would seem to
be the sabre, which, in the furious charges
of the cavalry regiments engaged at Sedan,
and in all the battles of the war, killed but
six men.

Great interest is being taken in many
countries in this subject of "cold steel in
time of war," and efforts are being made
to prove the truth or falsity of the saying at-
tributed to the humorist though ferocious
SOUZOUZOFF that "the bullet is a silly thing,
but the bayonet firm and heroic." In our
own Army the discussion was initiated by
Gen. SHERMAN, upon a recommendation of
Gen. BENET, Chief of Ordnance, that the
sabre and bayonet shall cease to form part
of the armament of troops. The General-
in-Chief called, not only for the views of
officers of the line and staff, who can
speak as experts, and commanders whose
men are thus armed, but also instructed
Lieut. GRANT, our military representative

with the Russian Army in the late cam-
paign, to make a special study of the ques-
tion involved. So far as the views of our
officers are concerned, a majority of them
seem to be in favor of a retention of these
time-honored weapons; but the theory of
the minority is equally good argument for
their abolition. Lieut. GREEN, however,
had excellent opportunities for proving the
truth of the maxim of NAPOLEON, that
"theory and practice are not the same thing
in war." In the Russo-Russian war
several instances occurred in which bodies
of men closed with one another on the ac-
tual field of battle, and when, consequently,
the bayonet was used, with more or less de-
cisive effect. These hand-to-hand encounters
were, it is true, never of long duration,
but while they lasted the fighting was ex-
ceedingly fierce. On more than one occa-
sion, so it is reported, no quarter was either
asked for or given after once bayonet had
crossed bayonet; but official statistics may
possibly disclose the fact that these san-
guinary and stubborn contests were not
more fatal than during the German cam-
paign.

While the weight of evidence given by
American officers is in favor of the retention
of the sabre and bayonet, that of fore-
ign officers is in the opposite direction.
This is particularly true as regards the
sabre. Col. DENNISON, in his prize essay
on cavalry, goes so far as to pronounce the
sabre contemptible, and advocates a charge
revolver in hand. An "English Cavalry
Officer," in a work entitled *Notes on Cavalry
Tactics, Organisation, &c.*, is of opinion
that the sabre or lance is the first weapon
of the cavalry soldier; but he thinks fire-
arms of some sort, in fact, in-
dispensable. The Germans go beyond this.
In a *précis* of an article from the
Militär Wochenblatt, Col. OUVRY
says: "The view that the sabre is the arm
which forms the essential characteristic of
the cavalryman must, since the experiment
of 1870-1, fall to the ground. The most
complete independent action for cavalry
must be the watchword in the future, and
to add this good fire-arm must be supplied."
We may add that in Germany even the Lan-
cers have a certain proportion of rifles in
every squadron.

What is so much lost sight of in this kind
of argument is the fact of the enormously
increased value of fire-arms. The increased
use of intrenchments on battle-grounds
in it, it is believed, tend to circumscribe the
action of cavalry. The extreme range and
rapid firing of the rifle and the increased
power of cross-fire will, as a rule, enable
the infantryman to hold his own, not only
against horsemen in any formation and
moving at any speed, but against infantry
charges as well. But opportunities may
occur in the best-regulated battles, and
though they would suffer dreadfully in pass-
ing the zone of fire, the attacking party
might, in a hand-to-hand fight, have their
vengeance. With a view, however, to such a
chance, a cavalryman should be armed with a
straight weapon, being the one best adapted
for giving point, inasmuch as a cut is seldom
deadly, while a thrust is generally so. As for
"terror in a long line of glittering steel,"
or as to its not being "in human nature to
stand and wait for bristling bayonets,"
there is perhaps a good deal of nonsense in
such expressions. At any rate, the Con-
federate soldiers in front of THOMAS at
Chickamauga, and of SCHOFIELD at Resaca,
were not so intimidated, much to the sur-
prise, not to say disgust, of those who were
trying hard to convince them that these
charges were irresistible. The testimony
on this subject of three great Captains may
be epitomized as follows: NAPOLEON, at
St. Helena, said that he knew not "a
single instance in which twenty
pieces of cannon judiciously placed
and in battery, were ever carried by the
bayonet;" Gen. WINFIELD SCOTT used to
assert that such a thing as a bayonet wound
inflicted in a charge was almost unheard of
in his experience; and Gen. GRANT says
in effect that in modern warfare, "neither
the sabre nor the bayonet are of use." Such
testimony as this should strengthen rather
than weaken the recommendation made by
the Chief of Ordnance. It is by no means
unlikely that since fighting behind earth-
works will have so large a place in the war-
fare of the future, some armor covering for
the head, neck, and perhaps arm, may be
desired for infantry, in which event they
will have to be relieved of much of the
weight they now carry.

IMPROVED HYSTERIA.

Disease is progressive. It has sought the
spirit of the age, and insists upon adopting
improvements. There are diseases which a
century ago had certain symptoms, which
were always precisely the same. This gave
the physician a great deal of comfort.
When he met such a disease, he knew just
what it was and just what it would do. To-
day, these same diseases have changed their
character so much that they are scarcely
recognizable under their old names. In fact,
some of them have really become entirely
new diseases, and gone into business on
their own account. There is typhoid fever,
for instance, which was formerly known as
typhus fever, but which, within the memory
of the present generation, has separated it-
self from typhus, and does, perhaps, a larger
business than the old disease. So, too,
diphtheria is evidently the result of improve-
ments put upon an old-fashioned kind of
fever, and though we feel that we could
easily get along without it, there is no deny-
ing that in point of efficiency it surpasses
nearly every one of our old-established
fevers.

It is painful to learn that hysteria has
lately joined in the march of improvement,
and bids fair to become vastly more vigor-
ous in its character and broad in its aims
than it has hitherto been. Hysteria was
never a popular disease, but it was always
simple and straightforward. Its symptoms
were marked, and no husband or physician
could mistake them. The disease was not—
as every disease is now said to be by learned
plumbers—the result of defective drainage,
but belonged to the class of diseases pro-
duced by unsatisfied longings for bonnets,
jewelry, and other things dear to the female
heart. It was also frequently produced by
jealousy and that congenial hatred of,
and disbelief in, "the lodge," which is a
characteristic of married women. It usually
began with a tendency on the part of the
patient to become rigid and to fall upon the
nearest and softest piece of furniture. She
—for as it was known the disease always
attacks women—would then cry and laugh

by turns, while constantly denouncing her
husband as a brute and demanding either
that he should be put to death or that she
should die. The state of rigidity was
soon succeeded by a well-developed ten-
dency to "kick," and in many instances
this was followed by the throwing of things
—stove-lids and things—at the unfortunate
husband. The attack generally lasted from
an hour to six hours, and rarely seemed to
be benefited by any medicines which a
physician could prescribe. Experienced hus-
bands usually tried one of two remedies,
which were, it is true, unknown to the
material medica, but which were often
highly successful. One was the throwing
of a pail of water over the patient, and the
other was locking her alone in her room
and going out to call on the nearest pretty
girl. The latter remedy uniformly brought
the patient out of her hysterical fit within
five or ten minutes, but did not prevent its
recurrence at an early day. The pail of
water, on the contrary, did not cure the attack
for which it was administered, but it often
prevented any subsequent attack for a long
period of time. Could the two have been
combined—the water being administered im-
mediately after the locking up—the treat-
ment would probably have been a
specific for hysteria; but it was manifestly
impossible for a husband to throw water on
a wife who was locked up in strict seclu-
sion. Unpleasant as the disease was, it was
never fatal, either to the patient or to any
one else, and hence was not regarded with
any very great dread.

But now come dozens of lawyers and
learned medical men, who inform us that
hysteria is nearly as dangerous as the buzz-
saw or the plague. The other day, a young
woman, living at a town on the Hudson
River, was found by a party returning from
a picnic lying apparently insensible on the
floor, and with all her garments, including
those of the most esoteric character, neatly
piled on a chair by her side. On recover-
ing, she insisted that two men had attacked
her, given her chloroform, and reduced her
—to speak delicately and mathematically—
to her lowest terms. With the truth of this
story we have no concern; it is men-
tioned here because several physicians have
asserted that a tendency to separate one's
self from one's garments, and to pretend
or to imagine that the act was performed
by wicked men, is a frequent symptom of
the modern style of hysteria. This is a
most alarming statement. If hysteria has
taken to itself this new symptom, the male
population of this country is in terrible
danger. The yellow fever or the cholera is
bad enough, and its advent may well alarm
timid men; but what comfort can we take
in life if hysterical women are liable to de-



No. I.

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